REMARKS

ON THE

BEAUTIES

OF

POETRY.

By DANIEL WEBB, Esq;

Then Criticism the Muse's Handmaid prov'd,
To dress her Charms, and make her more belov'd.
Essay on Criticism.

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Aſpaſia, Hortenſius, Eugenio.

Hort. YOU did not know, Eugenio, that the Gentleman who has juſt left us, is a Poet. You ſaw how he took fire at your reflection on Rhyme. Your aſſertion, that Blank Verſe is better adapted to the genius of Poetry, and the general improvement of Eloquence, cannot be diſputed, whenever the abuſe of rhyme is carried ſo far, as that the Sound becomes more the object of our attention than the Senſe; or, that the force and beauty of Expreſſion are ſacrificed to an inſignificant jingle. Mr.

Dryden, I remember, ſpeaking of Rhyme, ſays—"What it adds to ſweetneſs, it takes away from ſenſe; and he who loſes leaſt by it, may be called a gainer."

Aſp. And yet there is ſomething ſo pleaſing in the chiming of ſounds, or elſe, from the influence of early impreſſions, we are ſo accuſtomed to receive and feel it as a pleaſure, that I am perſuaded, Eugenio's opinion, were it made public, would not have many followers.

Eug. You do well, Aſpaſia, to diſtinguiſh between things pleaſing in themſelves, and ſuch as are ſo merely from the force of habit. Were there any thing truly delightful in the nature of Rhymes, it is not probable, that the ancients ſhould have over-looked this advantage; nor would it have been reſerved for a ſet of trifling Monks, to ſing them into reputation. But theſe are general reflections: in order to decide the matter in debate, it would be neceſſary to make a particular inquiry into the Beauties of Verſification; and to determine from them the merits of its ſeveral modes.

Aſp.

Aſp. I WISH, Eugenio, you would undertake this taſk. One condition, however, I muſt inſiſt on, that in Love matters you ſhew us ſome indulgence.——

What will you leave us, if you ſteal our
Rhyme?

Hor. JINGLING is ſo pretty a ſubſtitute of ſentiment, it is ſo wedded to gallantry, that it were a cruelty to divorce them. I will ſecure you, Aſpaſia, againſt any ſuch attempt, by the authority of Shakeſpear; who, in the commerce of Love, places Rhymes in ſo reſpectable a light, that he ſets them on a level even with bracelets, rings, and ſweetmeats—The paſſage is deciſive.——

E. - - - - My gracious Duke,
This man hath witch'd the boſom of my
child:
Thou, thou, Lyſander, thou haſt *giv'n her*
rhymes,
And ſtol'n th' impreſſion of her fantaſie
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds,
conceits,

Knacks, trifles, noſegays, ſweetmeats, (meſ-
ſengers
Of ſtrong prevailment in unharden'd youth.)
M. N. D.

This, Eugenio, is an authority which you muſt not diſpute; and, as Aſpaſia has made conditions for her love ſongs, I muſt beg a neutrality for epigrams, riddles, and the modern ode. Let me add to theſe, that ſpecies of poetry, which we call the Mock-Heroic: for, here, I think, the rhyme ſeems to forward the playfulneſs in the ideas.

Eug. As I mean to confine my obſervations to truth and nature, the exemptions you have inſiſted on, will take place of courſe.

The ſole aim of verſification is harmony. To underſtand this properly, we muſt divide it into two kinds. The firſt conſiſts in a general flow of verſe, moſt pleaſing to the ear, but independent on the ſenſe: the ſecond, in bringing the ſound or meaſure of the verſe to correſpond with, and accompany the idea. The former may be called a verbal harmony: the latter a ſentimental.

If

If we conſider the flow of verſe merely as muſic, it will then be allowed, [a] that variety is no leſs neceſſary than ſweetneſs; and that a continued repetition of the ſame movements, muſt be as tireſome in poetry, as it would be in muſic. On examining Mr. Pope's verſes, we ſhall find, that in eighteen out of twenty, the pauſes reſt on the fourth and laſt, or the fifth and laſt ſyllables: and that, almoſt without exception, the period is divided into two equal lines, and, as it were, link'd by the rhyme into a couplet.

For example------

All are but parts of one ſtupendous whole,
Whoſe body Nature is, ‖ and God the ſoul;
That chang'd thro' all, ‖ and yet in all the ſame,
Great in the Earth, ‖ as in th' Ætherial frame;

[a] Και ετι λειξις κραλιστη πασων, η τις αν εχοι πλειστας αναπαυλας τε και μεταβολας αρμονιας — ρυθμοι τε αλλοι αλλοι, και τασεις φωνης αι καλουμεναι προσωδιαι διαφοροι, κλεπτουσαι τη ποικιλια τον κορον.

Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat.

Warms in the ſun, ‖ refreſhes in the breeze,
Glows in the ſtars, ‖ and bloſſoms in the trees;
Lives thro' all life, ‖ extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, ‖ operates unſpent.
Eſſay on Man.

EVERY ear muſt feel the ill effect of the [b] monotony in theſe lines; the cauſe of it is obvious; this verſe conſiſts of ten ſyllables, or five feet; when the pauſe falls on the fourth ſyllable, we ſhall find, that we pronounce the ſix laſt in the ſame time that we do the four firſt; ſo that the couplet is not only divided into two equal lines, but each line, with reſpect to time, is divided into two equal parts-----

As,

Warms in the ſun, ‖ refreſhes in the breeze,
Glows in the ſtars, ‖ and bloſſoms in the trees.

Or elſe, the pauſe falls on the fifth ſyllable, and then the line is divided with mechanic exactneſs.

As,

[b] Διαναπαυειν τε και ταυτοληλα φημι δειν, μεταβολας ευχαιρους εισφερονλα. Και γαρ η μεταβολη παντος εργου χρημα μεγιστον. Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat, Sect. 12.

As,

Spreads undivided, ‖ operates unſpent.

Hor. Mr. Pope, in a letter to Mr. Walſh, ſpeaking of the Engliſh verſe, ſays, 'there 'is naturally a pauſe at the fourth, fifth, 'or ſixth ſyllable. It is upon theſe the ear 'reſts, and upon the judicious change and 'management of which depends the va-'riety of verſification.' Of this he gives the following examples:

At the fifth.

Where e'er thy navy ‖ ſpreads her canvaſs wings,

At the fourth.

Homage to thee, ‖ and peace to all ſhe brings.

At the ſixth.

Like tracts of leverets, ‖ in morning ſnow.

Eug. In this place, Mr. Pope takes no notice of the ſecond pauſe, which always reſts on the laſt word of each line, and is ſtrongly marked by the rhyme. But, it is on the balance between the two pauſes, that the monotony of the verſe depends. Now, this balance is governed by the equal divi-

ſion of the line in point of time. Thus, if you repeat the two firſt examples given, you will find no difference, as to the time, whether the pauſe falls on the fourth or fifth ſyllable; and this, I think, will extend even to the laſt example: or, if there ſhould be any difference, it is ſo trifling, that it will generally eſcape the ear. But this is not ſo in blank verſe; for, the lines being made often to run one into the other, the ſecond pauſe is ſunk; the balance, from the equal diviſion of each line is removed; and by changing the pauſes at pleaſure, an open is given into an unlimited variety.

OBSERVE the effects in the firſt lines of Paradiſe Loſt.

Of man's firſt diſobedience, ‖ and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, ‖ whoſe mortal taſte
Brought death into the world, ‖ and all our woe,
With loſs of Eden, ‖ till one greater Man
Reſtore us, ‖ and regain the bliſsful ſeat,
Sing, heavenly Muſe.

IN theſe, and the lines which immediately follow, the pauſes are ſhifted thro' all the ten ſyllables.

Hor.

Hor. BUT this variety is not inſeparable from the nature of blank verſe. In Addiſon's Cato, there is, I think, the very ſame monotony which you have condemned in Mr. Pope: Thus,

The dawn is overcaſt, ‖ the morning low'rs,
And heavily in clouds ‖ brings on the day;
The great, th' important day ‖
Big with the fate ‖ of Cato and of Rome.

Again,

Who knows not this? ‖ but what can Cato do
Againſt a world, ‖ a baſe degenerate world,
That courts the yoke, ‖ and bows the neck to Cæſar?
Pent up in Utica, ‖ he vainly forms
A poor epitome ‖ of Roman greatneſs.

Aſp. THIS is the very echo of the couplet meaſure.

Eug. NOTHING could be more to my purpoſe; it confirms all that I have advanced; and proves further, that the monotony of the couplet does not proceed, as has been imagined, from the repetition of the rhymes, but from a ſameneſs in the move-

movement of the verſe. No doubt, the uſe of rhymes was the firſt cauſe of confining poetic harmony to ſuch narrow limits [c]. Mr. Addiſon, accuſtomed to the ſecure monotony of the couplet, had neither the genius to bear him thro', nor courage to attempt the unbounded variety of the Miltonic meaſures. Birds of a weak flight move always in a line; but, the Eagle, wonderful in his ſoarings, ſhews in his very ſtoops the power of his wing. A poet, of a ſuperior ſpirit, muſt have reſources in the variety of his numbers. The flight of Satan, in Paradiſe Loſt, is not to be pent up in a couplet.

Then from pole to pole
He views in breadth; and without longer pauſe,
Down right into the world's firſt region throws
His flight precipitant; and winds with eaſe
Through the pure marble air his oblique way,
Amongſt innumerable ſtars. *Hor.*

[c] Αλλα καιπερ ηδεως και μεγαλοπρεπως πολλα συνθειλες οι ανδρες εἱοι, περι τας μεταβολας και την ποικιλιαν ε παυ ειλυχασιν. Dion. Hal. de Struct. Orat.

Hor. In comparing, as you have done, the gradations in poetic harmony to the flight of birds, by the ſoarings and ſtoops of the Eagle, I preſume, you mean ſomething equivalent to thoſe enforcements and lowering of ſounds, which give ſuch a pleaſing variety, and have ſo powerful an effect in muſic.

Eug. Of this we have a fine example in the following paſſage; in which you'll obſerve, that the Poet ſets out with almoſt a proſaic weakneſs of verſe; thence riſing gradually, like the ſwell of an organ, he ſoars into the higheſt dignity of ſound.

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whoſe guile,
Stir'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had caſt him out from heav'n, with all his hoſt
Of rebel Angels, by whoſe aid aſpiring
To ſet himſelf in glory above his peers,
He truſted to have equal'd the moſt high,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Againſt the throne and monarchy of God
Rais'd

Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the almighty power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless Perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains, and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
Par. Lost.

It is obvious from what I have said of it, that the Couplet is not formed for such gradations as these. On the contrary, from the sameness in its flow, every sentiment, of what nature soever, comes equally recommended to the ear, and of course to our attention. Thus, the following thought in Eloisa to Abelard, receives as much importance from the movement of the verse, as it could have done, had it been destined to inspire us with the most noble and virtuous feelings.

Not Cæsar's empress wou'd I *deign to prove*:
No, make me mistress to the man I love.

Asp.

Aſp. THIS ſentiment may, as you have obſerved, receive an importance from the movement of the verſe; but you will allow, that it is very little indebted to the expreſſion.

Eug. THE expreſſion muſt often be diſgraced, when a rhyme is neceſſary. You have made, Aſpaſia, a much better uſe of this paſſage, than I meant to do: for I produced it merely to ſhew, that where a ſameneſs of verſification prevails, there can be no degrees, no contraſts in the ſounds, which, like ſhades in painting, throw forward, and give a diſtinction to the ſuperior beauties.

Hor. MR. Pope ſeems to have had the ſame idea, with reſpect to the thoughts, that you have with reſpect to the ſounds. He ſays,

'To beſtow heightening on every part, 'is monſtrous: ſome parts ought to be 'lower than the reſt; and nothing looks 'more ridiculous than a work, where the 'thoughts, however different in their own 'nature, ſeem all on a level.'—

Letter to Mr. Walſh.

Eug.

Eug. I wonder he did not perceive the ill effects of this equality in the cadence of his verſe, as well as in the colouring of his ideas. Of all the modes of verſification, that have been cultivated by men of ſenſe, the [*d*] Latin diſtich, and modern couplet are the greateſt levellers. There is no liberty, no continuance in their movements. Like the out-line of a ſcholar in drawing, they are broken, and interrupted; but, a flow of pencil is the ſtile of a maſter in his art. Would you have a proof of what I advance?

Ye ſacred Nine! that all my ſoul poſſeſs,
Whoſe raptures fire me, and whoſe viſions bleſs;
Bear me, oh bear me to ſequeſter'd ſcenes,
The bow'ry mazes, and ſurrounding greens.

W. Foreſt.

HERE,

[*d*] The couplet, like the diſtich, has a ſtrong epigrammatic turn: it is formed to run into points; but, above all, it delights in the antitheſis; and the art of the verſifier is complete, when the diſcord in the ideas is proportioned to the accord in the ſounds. To jar and jingle in the ſame breath, is a maſterpiece of Gothic refinement.

HERE, you cannot but be ſenſible, how the enthuſiaſm is tamed by the preciſion of the couplet, and the conſequent littleneſs in the ſcenery.

How different Milton?

Yet not the more
Ceaſe I to wander, where the Muſes haunt
Clear ſpring, or ſhady grove, or ſunny hill,
Smit with the love of ſacred ſong; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flow'ry brooks beneath,
That waſh thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I viſit.

Par. Loſt.

THO' it do not immediately belong to this part of my ſubject, yet I muſt take notice here of a beauty, which finds its place naturally in blank verſe, but is almoſt incompatible with the regular movement of the couplet. I mean thoſe ſudden breaks or tranſitions in the verſe, which ſo ſtrongly characterize the paſſions; and dart, as it were, a ſentiment into the inmoſt ſoul of the reader.

Is this the region, this the ſoil, the clime,
Said then the loſt Arch-angel, this the ſeat
That we muſt change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celeſtial light. *Be it ſo*, ſince he
Who now is ſov'ran can diſpoſe and bid
What ſhall be right: *farthest from him is bēſt*,
Whom reaſon hath equal'd, force hath made ſupreme
Above his equals. *Farewell, happy fields*,
Where joy for ever dwells. *Hail, horrors, hail*
Infernal world, and thou profoundeſt hell
Receive thy new poſſeſſor.

Par. Loſt.

In the pathetic ſpeeches of Dido, in the fourth Æneid, there are many fine examples of the force that may be given to a ſentiment, by theſe ſudden breaks and tranſitions in the verſe: yet, theſe are entirely loſt in the Engliſh tranſlation. It cannot be ſaid, that Dryden wanted feeling. To what then can we impute this weakneſs, if it be not to the invariable tameneſs and regularity of the couplet? You, Hortenſio, may be convinced of this, by comparing the Engliſh with the Roman poet: but,

Aſpaſia,

Aſpaſia muſt be ſatisfied ſome other way. I will therefore repeat Mr. Dryden's Tranſlation of a particular paſſage; after which, I will give you one in blank verſe, which, I think, enters more into the ſpirit of the original. As I am certain, Aſpaſia, that you remember both the paſſage and the occaſion; it will require no introduction.

[e] As if the peaceful ſtate
Of heavenly powers were touch'd with human fate!
But go: thy flight no longer I detain,
Go ſeek thy promis'd kingdom thro' the main;
Yet, if the heavens will hear my pious vow,
The faithleſs waves, not half ſo falſe as thou,
Or ſecret ſands ſhall ſepulchres afford
To thy proud veſſels, and their perjur'd Lord.
Then ſhalt thou call on injur'd Dido's name.

Aſp.

[e] Scilicet is ſuperis labor eſt, ea cura quietos
Sollicitat! Neque te teneo, neque dicta refello.
I, ſequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas;
Spero equidem mediis, ſi quid pia numina poſſunt,
Supplicia hauſurum ſcopulis, ac nomine Dido
Sæpe vocaturum——

Aſp. I HOPE, Eugenio, your blank verſe will give the poor queen a little more ſpirit.

Eug. You ſhall judge for yourſelf——

Think we, ſuch toils, ſuch cares diſturb the peace
Of heav'ns bleſt Habitants? Alike I ſcorn
Thy perſon and impoſture. Go, purſue
Thro' ſeas, thro' ſtorms thy viſionary throne;
In thy mid-courſe, if juſtice rules above,
O may deſtruction wait thee! may'ſt thou, daſh'd
On ſome avenging rock, call, often call
On loſt Eliza---

IT often happens in the couplet verſification, that when the poet has fully expreſſed his idea, the neceſſity of a rhyme obliges him to weaken its effect by the addition of ſome unneceſſary circumſtance: as in the following inſtance---

[*f*] What do I ſay? where am I? fury turns
My brain; *and my diſtemper'd boſom burns.*
Dryden.

[*f*] Quid loquor? aut ubi ſum? Quæ mentem inſania mutat? Vir.

Some--

Sometimes this is carried to a ridiculous exceſs.

[g] To thoſe whom fevers burn, the piercing ſmell
Of vigorous wine is grievous, *Death and Hell.* Creech.

We are tempted to laugh at ſuch trifling as this. But what ſhall we ſay, when the nobleſt images are ruined for the ſake of a jingle?

[b] He ſpoke, and awful bends his ſable brows;
Shakes his ambroſial curls, and *gives* the nod;
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of the God. High

[g] At cum membra hominis percepit fervida febris,
Tum fit odor vini plagæ mactabilis inſtar. Lucretius.

[b] Η, και κυανεῃσιν επ' οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων
Αμβροσιαι δ' αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος
Κρατος απ' αθανατοιο, μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν Ολυμπον.
Dixit, et nigris ſuperciliis *annuit* Saturnius:
Ambroſiæ vero comæ *concuſſæ ſunt* regis
A capite immortali; ac magnum tremefecit Olympum. Clarke.

High Heav'n with trembling the dread
ſignal took,
And all Olympus to the centre ſhook.
Pope.

Had it not been for the rhyme, that third line had never found its way into this deſcription. I need not obſerve to you, how it interrupts the ſucceſſion of the ideas, and embaraſſes the image. It was owing to the ſame cauſe, that Jupiter is repreſented ſhaking his curls, before he had given the nod; whence, that which in the original was a happy effect, becomes in the tranſlation a trifling action.

Aſp. I FORGIVE you this time, Eugenio, but let me have no more tranſlations.

Eug. YOUR reproof is juſt; as the force of the laſt example turns on a compariſon, which it is not in your power to make. I ſhall not forget the attention due to you a ſecond time.

HAVING thus far ſhewn that blank verſe has many advantages over rhyme; and that it leaves the poet infinitely more at large with

with reſpect to the ſenſe, the ſound, and the expreſſion: I ſhall conclude this part of my ſubject, with a remark on the ill effect, in our language, from the prevalence of that hiſſing conſonant the S *. The Greeks, we are told, had ſuch an averſion to this letter, that they called it the ſavage, the impure letter: if this were ſo in a language rich in vowels, what muſt it be in one ſo over-charged with conſonants as ours? When the neceſſity of a rhyme throws the governing verb in a period into the preſent time, all the other verbs thro' that period muſt follow the lead; thus---

Is it for thee the lark aſcends and ſings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Eſ. on Man.

Here, inſtead of the melting warble of a lark, we have the diſſonant hiſſing of a ſerpent. Should it be ſaid to this, that theſe are objections rather, to the nature of our language, than to the art of the poet; I anſwer, it may be ſo, while it is under the ſervitude of rhime: but why ſhould we prefer that mode of verſification, which aggravates

vates the imperfections of our own language, and prevents our imitating, or adopting the beauties of others? To purſue theſe reflections minutely, would be to deſcend from the character of a critic to that of a grammarian; I ſhall therefore content myſelf with obſerving, that it is a fault, to ſuffer any one letter to take poſſeſſion of the ear, or to govern entirely the ſound of the verſe: unleſs, where the alliteration is brought in aid of the ſenſe; in which caſe, it may ſometimes become a beauty: but certainly, it is not a beauty in the following inſtance. ---

E*ach ch*ief his ſev'nfold *ſh*ield diſplay'd,
And half un*ſh*eath'd the *ſh*ining blade.

Or,

By the hero's armed ſhades,
*Gl*itt'ring thro' the *gl*oomy *gl*ades.
Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.

In a leſs careful verſifier, ſuch effects might be imputed to negligence; but here, I doubt, they were deſigned as beauties. When the habit of playing with ſounds is once admitted into poetry, it branches out into

into innumerable triflings. We cannot, in this caſe, be too much on our guard againſt the force of example. The reputation of a writer makes even his errors faſhionable: we naturally imitate thoſe whom we admire; and when we cannot aſſume their graces, we adopt their foibles. I fear, Aſpaſia, that this minute criticiſm has tired your patience.

Aſp. Not at all: I look upon it as an artful lowering of your ſubject, from whence you are to riſe to the ſentimental harmony.

Eug. You give authority to my ideas, by the uſe you make of them.

In treating the ſecond part of my ſubject, you will, no doubt, expect, that I ſhould borrow, as I have already done, my examples from Milton: but here, I am tempted to change my author; principally, as it gives me an opportunity of doing juſtice in this particular, to the moſt extraordinary genius, that our country, or, perhaps, any other has produced. It ſeems then to me, that, Shakeſpear, when he at-

tends to it, is not only excellent in the mechaniſm of his verſe, but, in the ſentimental harmony, equal, if not ſuperior, to any of our Engliſh poets. The firſt example I ſhall give you of his merit in this kind, is in the celebrated ſpeech of King John to Hubert, when he firſt opens to him his deſigns on the life of Arthur.

Hubert.

I am much bounden to your majeſty.

K. *John.*

Good friend, thou haſt no cauſe to ſay ſo yet;
But thou ſhalt have; "and creep time ne'er
ſo ſlow,
Yet it ſhall come for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to ſay---but let it go:
The ſun is in the heaven, and the proud
day
Attended with the pleaſures of the world
Is all too wanton and too full of gawds,
To give me audience. "If the midnight
bell
"Did, with his iron tongue and brazen
mouth
"Sound on unto the drowſie race of night;

"If

"If this ſame were a church-yard where
we ſtand,
"And thou poſſeſſed with a thouſand
wrongs;
"Or if that ſurly ſpirit, Melancholy,
"Had bak'd thy blood and made it heavy-
thick,
"Which elſe runs tickling up and down
the veins. &c.

Hor. I ALLOW you, that in theſe lines, there is a general agreement between the ſound, or [*i*] rather, between the movement of

[*i*] The neceſſity of this diſtinction will appear from hence, that the movement of a verſe may be good, and the ſound at the ſame time may be faulty.—

As,

Muſic her ſoft aſſuaſive voice applies.
Ode on St. Cecil.

There is a continued hiſs thro' this line——

The Greek Critics carefully obſerved this diſtinction: thus Ariſtotle—Λεγω δε ηδυσμενον μεν λογον, τον εχοντα ρυθμον και αρμονιαν και μελος.

By the ρυθμος was meant the meaſure or movement of the verſe; by μελος, the ſweetneſs of the ſound; and by Harmony, the agreement of either, or of both with the idea. The French Critic, Dacier, by not

of the verſe and the idea which it conveys; but it will not ſo readily be allowed you that this was deſigned: and the generality of readers will, I dare ſay, eſteem it rather caſual than artificial.

Eug. WHEN a man ſtrongly affected by any paſſion, expreſſes himſelf in words, the natural tones of which correſpond with his ideas, it may poſſibly be by accident. But when we obſerve the ſame co-incidence in a Poet, it is moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that it is the effect of deſign. For as he has time to ſelect his images and ſentiments, ſo he has likewiſe to accommodate the movement of his numbers to the nature of thoſe ideas he means to expreſs.

Aſp. I HAVE heard, that there have been Philoſophers who ſuppoſed that all the beauties

entering into this diſtinction, has fallen into a ſtrange error; for he ſuppoſes that by the ρυθμος and μελος Ariſtotle meant the dancing and muſic which uſually accompanied the Greek drama. But I cannot conceive how either dancing or piping could be reckoned a conſtituent part of verſification of—λογον, τον ιχοντα ρυθμον, &c.—Eſpecially, if, as this ſame Critic informs us, the dancing and muſic were at the end of the Acts.——

beauties in nature were produced by chance; I fancy, they would not have been well pleaſed, to have had the beauties in their writings included in the jumble.

Eug. WERE we to follow the common notions concerning Shakeſpear, we ſhould be induced to think, that he ſtruck out his pictures by daſhing his pencil againſt the canvaſs; or that, like the Sibyl in Virgil, he was only a temporary inſtrument, to convey the dictates of a ſuperior agent.

Hor. MR. Pope has given ſome encouragement to this notion, where he ſays—'The poetry of Shakeſpear is inſpiration 'indeed: he is not ſo much an imitator as 'an inſtrument of nature; and 'tis not ſo 'juſt to ſay that he ſpeaks from her, as 'that ſhe ſpeaks thro' him.'

Aſp. THESE diſtinctions are too ſubtle for me. I ſhall never be brought to conſider the beauties of a Poet in the ſame light that I do the colours in a Tulip.----

Eug. THE beauties of Shakeſpear's verſification appear accidental when they are

moſt artificial: for, the mechaniſm of his verſe, however [*k*] carefully formed to have its effect, is ſo faſhioned to the temper of the ſpeaker, and nature of the ſubject, that we overlook the artifice; and it paſſes along unheeded, as the caſual flow of an unſtudied eloquence. Thus the bold and reſolute Petruchio.

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
Have I not heard the ſea, puffed up with winds,
Rage like an angry boar chafed with ſweat?
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field?
And heav'n's artillery thunder in the ſkies?
Have I not in a pitched battle heard
Loud

[*k*] Yet muſt I not give nature all: thy art
My gentle Shakeſpear, muſt enjoy a part.
For tho' the Poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the faſhion: and that he
Who caſts to write a *living line* muſt ſweat
(Such as thine are) and ſtrike the ſecond heat
Upon the Muſes anvile———

Again———
In his well torned, and true filed lines.
Ben Johnſon,
to the memory of Mr. William Shakeſpear.

Loud 'larums, neighing ſteeds, and trumpets
clangue?

In ſupport of the ſentimental harmony in theſe lines, you may obſerve, how, by changing the pauſes, and varying the movement, the poet has at once guarded againſt a monotony, and enforced his ideas. Would you ſee his artifice in its full light, let us follow him through a ſucceſſion of varied movements. Is there not ſomething mournful in the cadence of theſe lines?

Conſtance.

What doſt thou mean by ſhaking of thy
head?
Why doſt thou look ſo ſadly on my ſon?
What means that hand upon that breaſt of
thine?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable
rheum? K. *John.*

How different are the accents of the unhappy Conſtance, in this ſolemn and earneſt addreſs to Heaven?

Arm, arm, ye Heavens, againſt theſe perjur'd kings!

A widow cries, Be husband to me, Heav'n!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Wear out the day in peace; but ere sun-set,
Set armed discord twixt these perjured kings,
Hear me, oh, hear me!

Observe what starts of passion succeed.

Austria. Lady Constance, peace.

Const. War, war, no peace; peace is to me a war.
O Lymoges, O Austria! thou dost shame
That bloody spoil: thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward,
Thou little valiant, great in villany!

- - - - - - - What a fool art thou,
A ramping fool, to brag, to stamp and swear
Upon my party; thou cold blooded slave,
Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side?
Does the anxious heart lament its lost peace?

- - - - - - - - - O gentle sleep,
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?

Why

Why rather, Sleep, ly'ſt thou in ſmoaky
cribs,
Upon uneaſie pallets ſtretching thee,
And huſht with buzzing night-flies to thy
ſlumber;
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the Great,
Under the canopies of coſtly ſtate,
And lull'd with ſounds of ſweeteſt melody?

K. *H.* IVth.

MARK, how the terrors of a guilty mind echo thro' theſe lines----

- - - O it is monſtrous! monſtrous!
Methought the billows ſpoke, and told me
of it;
The winds did ſing it to me, and the thun-
der,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pro-
nounc'd
The name of Proſper----

Tempeſt.

WOULD you compare, Aſpaſia, the tender breathings of a Lover, with the bold and ſwelling tones of a ſoldier?

Glendower— She bids you,
All on the wanton ruſhes lay you down,
And reſt your gentle head upon her lap;
And ſhe will ſing the ſong that pleaſeth you;
And on your eye-lids crown the God of ſleep;
Charming your blood with pleaſing heavineſs;
Making ſuch difference betwixt wake and ſleep,
As is the difference betwixt day and night,
The hour before the heavenly-harneſs'd team
Begins his golden progreſs in the eaſt.

In agreement with the ideas, the poet has drawn out theſe lines into a languid monotony.

Othello.

Farewel the plumed troops, and the big war,
That make ambition virtue! Oh, farewell!
Farewell the neighing ſteed, and the ſhrill trump,
The ſpirit ſtirring drum, th' ear piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumſtance of glorious war;

And,

And, oh, you mortal engines, whoſe rude
throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours coun-
terfeit,
Farewell!---*Othello's occupation's gone.*

Aſp. That cloſe, Eugenio, was happy. Or, is it, that the change in your voice has given that effect to the verſe?

Eug. The voice of a Garrick cannot lend beauties to Shakeſpear; it is no ſmall praiſe that he can do him juſtice. When ſuch contraſts as theſe, which I have brought together, are made to ſucceed each other ſuddenly, and in the ſame breath, ſo that we immediately feel the tranſitions; then, the ſeveral parts have, not only the intrinſic beauties of muſical imitation, but likewiſe a relative advantage from their compariſon one with the other; and this may, with ſome allowance, be called the clear obſcure of harmony. The following paſſage, in Cymbeline, is a proof and illuſtration of what I have advanced.

Bellarius.

O! thou Goddeſs,
Thou divine nature! how thyſelf thou
blazon'ſt In

In theſe two princely boys! they are as
gentle
As Zephyrus blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his ſweet head; and yet as
rough
(Their royal blood enchaf'd) as the rud'ſt
wind
That by the top doth take the mountain
pine,
And make it ſtoop to th' vale.

WITH what dignity do the numbers move in the opening of this addreſs? In the cloſe, they ſpring into a ſtorm, and ſweep all before them.

Hor. I recollect, in Lear, a beautiful example of a moſt affecting tranſition in the ſound, correſponding with a ſudden and pathetic change in the idea.

Lear.

I tax not you, you elements, with unkind-
neſs;
I never gave you kingdoms, called you
children;
You owe me no ſubſcription. Then let fall
Your

Your horrible pleaſure;--here I ſtand your
brave;
" A poor, infirm, weak, and deſpis'd old
man.

Again, when Hamlet prevents Horatio from drinking the poiſon.

Hamlet.

If thou didſt ever hold me in thy heart,
Abſent thee from felicity a while,
" And in this harſh world draw thy breath
in pain.

The breaſt actually labours to get through this laſt line.

Eug. And yet theſe arts paſs unnoticed in Shakeſpear, while they are celebrated in Poets of inferior merit. The cauſe of this may be, that we more readily obſerve any artifice in the management of the ſounds, when we are not much affected by the ideas. It is in excellent poetry, as in capital painting, the fine and delicate touches of art are loſt in the general effect. It requires ſome degree of temper to trace the minute and auxiliary beauties of poetic harmony thro' ſuch a paſſage as this.---

Othello.

Othello.

Do you go back diſmay'd? 'tis a loſt fear:
Man but a ruſh againſt Othello's breaſt,
And he retires. Where ſhould Othello go?
Now—How doſt thou look now? Oh ill-
ſtarr'd wench,
Pale as thy ſmock! when we ſhall meet at
compt,
This look of thine will hurl my ſoul from
heav'n,
And fiends will ſnatch at it. Cold, cold,
my Girl,
Ev'n like thy chaſtity. O curſed ſlave!
Whip me, ye Devils,
From the poſſeſſion of this heav'nly ſight,
Blow me about in winds, roaſt me in ſulphur,
Plunge me in ſteep-down gulphs of liquid
fire.

BEFORE we quit Shakeſpear's verſification, I muſt obſerve to you,—that he intended it to be nothing more than a meaſured [*l*] or muſical proſe; except, when he meant

[*l*] In general, Shakeſpear's verſe has the eaſy proſaic flow of the Iambic: on extraordinary occaſions, it riſes into the dignity and harmony of the Hexameter. Thus he has greatly the advantage of the Greek

meant to riſe in his ſubject, or give a diſtinction to a thought; and then, we ſhall always trace in his numbers the influence of his feelings; and find, that they aſſume a regularity and harmony, in proportion as he was intereſted in the effects. Nothing could be more oppoſite to the genius and character of this Poet, than a conſtant equality of verſification; nay, it is eaſy to ſee that he has often been careful to avoid it. The ſame is obſervable in Milton, who ſometimes deſcends into a proſaic negligence, merely to interrupt the monotony; and, has frequently choſen to diſgrace his meaſures, rather than to fatigue the ear.

Hor.

Greek Tragedians, who were confined to the Iambick; and of the French, who, from the regularity of the Couplet, cannot looſen their verſe into a proſaic movement. That Shakeſpear's verſification is agreeable to nature, may be proved from the authority of Ariſtotle, who having obſerved, that the Iambick meaſure was beſt adapted to the genius of tragedy, becauſe it came the neareſt to common diſcourſe, proceeds thus—

Λεξεως δε γενομενης, αυτη η Φυσις το οικειον μετρον ευρε. Μαλιστα γαρ λεκτικον των μετρων το ιαμβειον εστι. Σημειον δε τουτου· πολυστα γαρ ιαμβεια λεγομεν εν τη διαλεκτῳ τη προς αλληλους· εξαμετρα δε ολιγακις, και εκβαινοντες της λεκτικης αρμονιας. Cap. iv. de Poetica.

Hor. Some Critics do not underſtand this ſo, when they tax his verſe with being often weak and unequal.

Eug. The error then muſt have been in his judgment; for, theſe inequalities were moſt certainly deſigned.

Having in this place ſupported an obſervation on Shakeſpear, by a proof drawn from the practice of Milton, it may not be improper to ſhew, that the verſification of theſe two poets had other points of reſemblance.

Full many a Lady
I've ey'd with beſt regard, and many a time,
Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear; for ſeveral virtues,
Have I lik'd ſeveral Women, never any
" With ſo full ſoul, but ſome defect in her
" Did quarrel with the nobleſt grace ſhe ow'd,
" And put it to the foil. But you, O you!
" So

"So perfect, and ſo peerleſs are created
"Of every creature's beſt.---

Tempeſt.

In this paſſage, the riſing from the feeble and proſaic movement of the firſt lines, to the even tenor of harmony in the laſt, is entirely Miltonic. Or, to ſpeak more juſtly, it is one of thoſe fine gradations in poetic harmony, which give a kind of growing energy to a thought, and form a principal beauty in the verſification of Shakeſpear and Milton.

Hor. There is a ſpecies of harmony, Eugenio, of which you have made no mention; and yet, ſome of our poets ſeem to delight much in it; I mean the imitating the preciſe idea in the ſound; as, in the whiſpering of the breeze, the tumbling of ruins.

Eug. Or, The rumbling of Drums, as thus,

The double, double double beat
Of the thund'ring Drum
Cries, Hark, the foes come.

Dryden.

This

THIS is altogether ridiculous; that rule of Criticism, the ſound ſhould ſeem an echo to the ſenſe, muſt not be underſtood too literally. The ſounds ſhould, indeed, be always in accord with the ſenſe; but they ſhould accompany, not mimic it. As the movements of a good dancer are governed by the muſic, ſo the muſic of the verſe ſhould be governed by the idea: but, the nature of language will not admit, in this latter caſe, of a conſtant correſpondence: however, though we cannot, ſo often as we might wiſh, make our numbers harmonize with the ſubject, we ſhould never ſuffer them to run counter to it---as they too evidently do in the following inſtance:

Not half ſo ſwift the trembling doves *can* fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid ſky;
Not half ſo ſwiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When thro' the clouds he drives the trembling doves.

Windſor Foreſt.

I HAVE not met with any lines more at variance with their ſubject than theſe: inſtead of running lightly off, they *do cleave* to the tongue.

To

To preſcribe how far we may go in this kind of imitation, is impoſſible, otherwiſe than by examples; for this, like many other beauties in poetry, can be determined only by a happineſs of feeling.

The author of the Fleece has carried the ſentimental harmony to the utmoſt allowable point, in the following deſcription of a ſudden calm.

with eaſy courſe
Their veſſels glide; unleſs their ſpeed be ſtopp'd
By dead calms, that oft lie on thoſe ſmooth ſeas,
While every Zephyr ſleeps; then the ſhrouds drop;
The downy feather on the cordage hung,
Moves not; the flat ſea ſhines like yellow gold
Fus'd in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of ſome old temple, wide.

It is evident, that the poet ſtudied the effect in theſe verſes; but he has ſoftened his artifice by the ſimplicity of his language;

guage; had it not been for this, the labour would have been manifeſt. Hence it appears, that the perfection of this ſpecies of harmony conſiſts in its ſeeming wholly accidental: and this can only be, when the words are ſo happily choſen, and the ſounds are ſo connected with the idea, that they ſeem all to ſpring from one and the ſame motion of the ſoul.

Hor. LET us, at the ſame time, ſuppoſe the idea to be beautiful, and then, your deſcription will reach much farther than you intended; for, it takes in, not only a part of good writing, but, perhaps the whole.

Eug. FROM this point, we may take a general view of our ſubject. We began by conſidering harmony ſimply as an addreſs to the ear: thence, we traced its correſpondence with the idea, and, of courſe, with the imagination. The ſimpleſt truth is pleaſing by its very nature; but this pleaſure cannot be too much heightened: the force and ſurpriſe of imagery, the elegance of diction, the varied accords of harmony tend all to this point. Poetry is to the

the ſoul, what the ſun is to nature; it calls forth, it cheriſhes, it adorns her beauties. As we improve our language, we multiply the reſources of poetry; of all the means of forwarding this improvement, the forming and perfecting our verſification is the moſt powerful.

Aſp. I did not imagine, Eugenio, that the flow of a verſe could have taken ſo large a range.

Eug. It extends ſtill farther. Why does the eye fill with gladneſs, at the bare mention of a great or generous action? The mind is pre-diſpoſed to receive the fineſt impreſſions: the true direction and happieſt effect of poetry, is, by renewing theſe impreſſions, to preſerve the mind in a ſtate of ſenſibility: we are induced to repeat thoſe impreſſions, by the pleaſing ſenſations with which they are attended: for, the ſupreme Goodneſs has ſo formed our organs, that thoſe arts which tend moſt to refine our feelings, and, of conſequence, our manners, give us at the ſame time the greateſt pleaſure. Now, it is probable, that all the

powers

powers which produce theſe refined pleaſures ſpring from one common principle, as it is evident they tend to one common end: for there is ſuch an intercourſe among them, that, while we perfect our ſenſations in any one of them, we acquire a general aptneſs for them all.

Hor. Muſt not the moral ſenſe partake, in ſome meaſure, of this general connexion?

Eug. The author of the Characteriſtics will anſwer you much better than I can do [*m*]: "The mind, which is ſpectator "or auditor of *other minds*, cannot be with- "out its *Eye* and *Ear*; ſo as to diſcern pro- "portion, diſtinguiſh ſound, and ſcan each "ſentiment or thought which comes before "it. It feels the ſoft and harſh, the agree- "able and diſagreeable, in the affections; "and finds a *foul* and *fair*, a *harmonious* "and a *diſſonant*, as really and truly here, "as in any muſical numbers, or in the out- "ward forms or repreſentations of ſenſible "things."

DIA-

[*m*] Inquiry concerning Virtue.

DIALOGUE II.

Aſpaſia, Hortenſius, Eugenio.

Hor. THE moment, Eugenio, you left us yeſterday, Aſpaſia betook herſelf to her Shakeſpear: her eagerneſs to apply the hints you have given her, is not to be ſatisfied, and ſhe ſeems to enjoy her diſcoveries, like one who had ſuddenly acquired a new ſenſe.

To nobler ſights,
Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed.

Aſp. SUCH advantages were not intended for us poor women; even Angels are partial, as you repreſent them: thus Michael, when he meant to enlighten Adam, ſays to him,

Aſcend

- - - - - - - - - - - Aſcend
This hill; let Eve (for I have drench'd her eyes)
Here ſleep below, while thou to foreſight wak'ſt.

So it is you men deal with us; you cut us off from the means of knowledge, and then wonder at our ignorance. Good ſenſe you have appropriated, by calling it manly. Taſte, indeed, you allow us; but you keep it in ſubjection to your ſuperior genius:---

Eug. WERE you to examine thoroughly the difference between Taſte and Genius, you would have the ſatisfaction to find, that there are few men who are entitled to a ſubmiſſion from you on this account.

Aſp. LET me, Eugenio, owe this obligation, as I have done many others, to you.

Eug. As our converſation yeſterday turned intirely on poetry, we may preſerve a connexion, by conſidering the qualities to be examined, ſolely as they relate to that art.

art. When they are once determined in any one mode, it will be eaſy to extend them to eloquence in general, and from thence to every art in which they are naturally exerted.

A Poet illuſtrates one object by a compariſon with another: he diſcovers a juſt and beautiful relation between two ideas: this is Genius. Aſpaſia feels in its whole force the merit of that invention; this is Taſte. Now, it is evident, that there muſt be a great difference between the perceiving a beauty that is diſcovered for us, and the making that diſcovery ourſelves: accordingly, we are aſſured by experience, that a man of quick perception, may be of ſlow invention; and that a lively reader may be a dull poet.

Hor. We are ſo apt to over-rate our own talents, that I do not at all wonder, that ſo many men ſhould, in themſelves, miſtake Senſibility for Genius. Are we not too much encouraged in this error by the vanity of Critics and Commentators, who are continually inſinuating to us, that they par-

take, in ſome meaſure, of that Divinity, which they attribute to their poets.

Eug. UNHAPPILY, they ſupport their pretenſion by the [*n*] authority of Cicero, who was himſelf the ſtrongeſt exception to it. In ſhort, Hortenſio, the beſt Critic, conſidered merely as ſuch, is but a dependent, a ſort of planet to his original; he does no more than receive and reflect that light, of which his poet is the fountain.

Aſp. IF you mean that I ſhould have a clear conception of Genius, you muſt deſcend from theſe exalted ideas to its effects.

Eug. THE diſtinctive property of Genius is to ſurprize, either by original Beauty, or Greatneſs in the idea. Theſe are the maſter ſprings; but there are others which are ſubordinate: for a ſuperior genius will ſo dreſs the moſt common thought, or familiar image, as to give it ſome unexpected advantage;

[*u*] Quorum omnium interpretes, ut Grammatici Poetarum, proxime ad eorum, quos interpretantur, divinationem videntur accedere—

Cic. de Divin. l. i.

vantage; by which it becomes apparently, if not really, original: the reſult is the ſame; we are ſurprized; every ſuch effect implies a degree of novelty, and, conſequently, of Invention.

Hor. Is not ſurpriſe rather the effect of wit than of genius?

Eug. To determine this, we muſt ſtate the difference between them. This ſeems to me to depend on the degrees of our penetration, and the nature of our feelings. The man of wit has a limited view into the relations of ideas; and from thoſe which he does ſee, his feelings direct him to chooſe the moſt ſingular, not the moſt beautiful. He works upon us by ſurpriſe merely; but the man of genius ſurpriſes by an exceſs of beauty.

Hor. It ſhould ſeem to follow from hence, that the genius may be a wit when he pleaſes; yet we have ſeen ſuch, who have made the attempt without ſucceſs.

Eug. Very rarely, when they give into the practice of being playful: thus, who

has more wit than Shakeſpear? If others have failed, it muſt have been from the influence of a better habit: accuſtomed to unite ideas by their beauties, they overlook the little points of ſimilitude in thoſe which are the moſt oppoſed; or, of difference, in thoſe which are the moſt united: hence, as Cunning is but a ſhort-ſighted Wiſdom, Wit may be called the ſhort-ſight of Genius.

Hor. You make a greater difference between them than will be allowed by many.

Eug. I use them in that ſenſe, in which they are underſtood, when we ſay, that Ovid had wit, and Virgil genius: that this is the moſt exact and received ſenſe of theſe words, will appear from hence, that, were I to aſſert, that Virgil had more wit than Ovid, I ſhould be laughed at: yet this would be the conſequence of underſtanding Wit in too [o] inlarged a ſenſe, or of making it equivalent to Genius.

Aſp.

[o] In the Eſſay on Criticiſm, it is ſaid—
True Wit is Nature to advantage dreſs'd.

But

Aſp. I HAVE been often ill ſatisfied with myſelf, for not readily entering into ſuch thoughts, as I have known were generally eſteemed witty. You have, I thank you, Eugenio, leſſened the number of my mortifications. I muſt own, I have always preferred Humour to Wit, perhaps it was, that I more eaſily underſtood it. I ſhould call upon you for a better explanation of this matter, were I not more intent on another. You remember, that, diſcourſing the other day, on a paſſage in the *Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting*, in which, the ſuperiority of Poetry is rather hinted at than explained, you promiſed me, that you would enlarge this part of the ſubject, and—

Eug. I UNDERSTAND you, Aſpaſia; and ſhould be glad, in this, as in every thing elſe, to prevent your wiſhes.

But immediately after this, the Poet adds—

For works may have more wit than does 'em good.

Now, let us ſubſtitute the definition in the Place of the thing, and it will ſtand thus. A work may have more of *Nature dreſs'd to advantage* than will do it good. This is impoſſible; and it is evident, that the confuſion ariſes from the Poet's having annexed two different ideas to the ſame word——

I OBSERVED juſt now, that the diſtinctive property of Genius is to ſurpriſe, either by original Beauty, or Greatneſs, in the idea.

THE principal beauties in Poetry, ſpring from the force or elegance of its images: of theſe, we will firſt examine ſuch as are peculiar to Poetry; after which, we will paſs to thoſe which are in common to Poetry and Painting. Of the former claſs, are all images founded on compariſons, either direct, or implied. The merit of theſe conſiſts in a ſtriking ſimilitude between two objects, which, to common obſervation, have no apparent or neceſſary connexion: hence we may judge of the merit of a compariſon, by the degree of our ſurpriſe, which ariſes from a combined admiration of its juſtneſs, its novelty, and beauty. A compariſon is direct in the following inſtance---

- - - - - - - On her left breaſt
A mole cinque-ſpotted, like the crimſon drops
I' th' bottom of a cowſlip ——

Cymbeline.

An

An implied compariſon, or, in the language of the Critics, a metaphor, conſiſts in conveying an idea intirely by the ſubſtitution of an image: this will be beſt underſtood by an example.----

ANGELO, in Meaſure for Meaſure, obſerving, that his guilty paſſion for Iſabella, was inflamed by his knowledge of her innocence, is ſhocked at the wickedneſs of his nature; which he aggravates by the force of a metaphor.

- - - - - - - - - Can it be,
That modeſty may more betray our ſenſe
Than woman's lightneſs! "having waſte ground enough,
"Shall we deſire to raiſe the Sanctuary,
"And pitch our evils there? Oh fie, fie, fie."

SOMETIMES a Poet has the happineſs to blend theſe two kinds of beauty in the ſame image: he ſets out with illuſtrating his object by a direct compariſon; and continues to ſupport it by a metaphor. This is a high degree of beauty; for, it can only

happen, when the compariſon is ſo exquiſitely juſt, that the qualities eſſential to the borrowed object, are, with the utmoſt propriety, transferred to the original one. Thus, Bellarius, deſcribing to his pupils, the ruin of his fortunes at court.

- - - - - Cymbeline lov'd me,
And when a ſoldier was the theme, my name
Was not far off: then was I as a tree,
Whoſe boughs did bend with fruit. But in one night,
A ſtorm, or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves;
And left me bare to weather.

Cymbeline.

Of this ſpecies of beauty, the following is, perhaps, a ſtill more elegant example---

- - - - She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her *damaſk* cheek.

Twelfth Night.

SHAKESPEAR's images are not mere addreſſes to the fancy; they do not play about the ſurface of an object; they carry us into its eſſence.——As, where the mother of Hamlet endeavours to excuſe his extravagance.———

- - - - This is mere madneſs;
And thus a while the fit will work on him:
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
Ere that her golden couplets are diſclos'd,
His ſilence will *ſit drooping*.

HAD the Poet commanded at one view the whole circle of Nature, he could not have ſelected ſuch another contraſt to madneſs. It is the moſt perfect image of a patient, innocent, and modeſt ſilence, that ever ſprung from human invention. It is by the frequency and degree of theſe beauties, principally, that an original Genius is diſtinguiſhed. Metaphors are to him, what the Eagle was to Jupiter, or the Doves to Venus, ſymbols of his Divinity; the ſure indications of Majeſty and Beauty.

Hor. It has been a matter of wonder to many, that an imagination, at times, ſo wild und ungovernable as that of Shakeſpear, ſhould, in the finer imitations of nature, be diſtinguiſhed by an unequalled elegance and propriety.

Eug. If we conſider the nature and progreſs of the imagination, we need not wonder, that ſuperior ſpirits ſhould be the moſt ſubject to theſe exceſſes. The extremities of poetic boldneſs, like thoſe of perſonal courage, will often have a tincture of extravagance. But, this will not be the caſe in men of ſubordinate talents; truſting more to imitation than their own feelings, they move in one even tenor; with them, judgment is but an obſervance of rules; a ſecurity to their weakneſs.

And often, to their comfort ſhall they find
The ſharded Beetle in a ſafer hold
Than is the full wing'd Eagle.——

Cymb.

The laſt ſpecies of beauty in comparative imagery, which I ſhall ſpeak of here, conſiſts

conſiſts in reducing a metaphor to a point. When a picture is given us in a ſingle word, to make out which, in our own imagination, we muſt go through a ſucceſſion of ideas, then are we ſurprized in the moſt agreeable manner, and the beauty, of courſe, is conſummate. You ſhall have, Aſpaſia, an example of this from your favourite author, Fletcher. Amintor, in order to conceal the cauſe of his grief, had put on a ſhow of mirth; Melantius, his friend, who wanted to extort the ſecret from him, was not to be ſo impoſed on.

- - - You may ſhape, Amintor,
Cauſes to cozen the whole world withall,
And yourſelf too; but 'tis not like a friend,
To hide your ſoul from me; 'tis not your nature
To be thus idle; I have ſeen you ſtand
As you were *blaſted*, midſt of all your mirth.
Maids Tragedy.

It is by the force or elegance of its alluſions and images, that a poetic diction is diſtinguiſhed from ſimple verſification. The Muſes, according to Johnſon, have their anvil,

anvil, and a verſe may be laboured into preciſion and harmony: but, the ſallies of the imagination are prompt and deciſive; they ſpring at once into being, and are beauties at their firſt conception. Thus, in the language of a Poet, the ſun is the *eye* of heaven: the heaven itſelf—a ſtarry *pavement*; a canopy *fretted* with *golden fire*.

Does the mind exult in its fulleſt freedom?
It is—as *broad*, as *general* as the *caſing* air.
What are the repeated calamities of life?
The *ſlings* and arrows of outrageous fortune?
The properties of ſleep?
The *birth* of each day's *life*; ſore labour's
bath;
Balm of *hurt* minds.

Are our tender years expoſed to the infection of vice?—the canker *galls* the *infants of the ſpring*. Is the night invoked to countenance deeds of horror and cruelty?

Come, thick night!
And *pall* thee in the dunneſt ſmoak of hell.

Hor. How miſerably naked of theſe beauties are the works of our ordinary ſongſters?

ſongſters? Their metaphors are like the ſcattered trees in a deſert, ſtarved and ſolitary: in Shakeſpear, they are vigorous, luxuriant, thickly ſpread over every part of his poetry.

Eug. THIS compariſon will hold, with reſpect to images in general: as to theſe, which we have been juſt deſcribing, they ſeem to me, to bear ſome reſemblance to thoſe drawings of the capital Painters, in which, though the parts are rather *hinted* than made out, yet the ideas are compleat; they both give a delightful exerciſe to our minds, in continuing and enlarging the deſign. Thus, when the queen would perſuade Hamlet to lay aſide his mourning:——

Good Hamlet, caſt thy *nighted* colour off.

This metaphor ſeems, at firſt, to reach no farther than the gloomineſs of Hamlet's dreſs; but if our ideas go along with the poet's, we ſhall extend it to the melancholy of his mind [*p*].

Hor.

[*p*] This is plain by Hamlet's anſwer.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
That can denote me truly.——

Hor. The manner in which you have expreſſed yourſelf in this place, gives me ſome reaſon to imagine, that, joined to the pleaſure which you have here remarked, we have a kind of ſelfiſh enjoyment on theſe occaſions; for, while we enter into the views, and obey the direction of the Poet, we fancy that we co-operate with him; we grow proud of the connexion, and plume ourſelves in his beauties. But let me not interrupt you.

Eug. The purpoſe of Imagery is either to illuſtrate, or aggrandize our ideas: of the former, enough has been ſaid.

The greatneſs of an image is moſt obvious, when it ſtrikes us by its immediate power, and with a ſudden effect; as, in the deſcription of Satan in Paradiſe Loſt.

\- - - - - - - He, above the reſt
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tow'r.

A second ſpecies of the ſublime conſiſts in giving a gradation to imagery. There is

is not, perhaps, in Poetry, a nobler inſtance of this, than in the deſcription of Satan's return to hell---

- - He through the midſt, unmark'd,
In ſhow Plebeian Angel militant
Of loweſt order, paſs'd; and from the door
Of that Plutonian hall, inviſible
Aſcended his high throne, which under ſtate
Of richeſt texture ſpread, at th' upper end
Was placed in regal luſtre. Down a while
He ſat, and round about him ſaw unſeen:
At laſt as from a cloud his fulgent head
And ſhape Star-bright appear'd.

Par. Loſt.

Hort. WHILE you repeated theſe lines, Eugenio, I felt myſelf affected with the ſame kind of pleaſure, as when we ſee a cloud riſing ſlowly from the vale, become by degrees the ornament of the heavens. Might I, therefore, judge from my own feelings, I ſhould conclude, that ſuch images as are in motion, and which, by a gradual enlargement, keep our ſenſes in ſuſpenſe, are more intereſting than thoſe, which owe their

their power to a ſingle impreſſion, and are perfect at their firſt appearance. Where there can be no gradation in an object, its influence on the mind is immediately determined.

Eug. In this obſervation, we ſee the reaſon, why the principal beauties in Paradiſe Loſt, have been naturally thrown on the perſon of Satan. To deſcribe a permanent and unchangeable glory, is to paint without ſhades; the Sun is more delightful in its ſetting, than in its meridian. The divine Perfection, pure and Angelic natures, can have no clouds, no contraſts; they are all one blaze. But, it is not ſo, in the deſcription of fallen Greatneſs; of diminiſhed and interrupted ſplendor; of a ſuperior nature ſunk and diſgraced, but emerging at intervals from its degradation. This is a ſubject ſo truly poetic; it gives riſe to ſuch a train of fluctuating images, that, let the object be ever ſo obnoxious, if the danger, as in the preſent caſe, be remote, it ſeizes on the imagination, all calmer conſiderations are thrown aſide, and the ſenſes are hurried away beyond the reach of reflection.

Aſp.

Aſp. THIS is the beſt apology I ever heard for a diabolical greatneſs.

Eug. As a great effect was produced in the laſt inſtance by a gradation in a ſingle image, ſo may it equally proceed from the arrangement or ſucceſſion of different ideas: Of this, the following deſcription of a ſtorm is a ſingular example.

Proſpero.

- - - - - - Haſt thou, Spirit,
Perform'd to point the tempeſt that I bad thee?

Ariel.

- - - - - - To every article:
I boarded the King's ſhip: now on the beak,
Now in the waſte, the deck, in every cabin
I flam'd amazement. Sometimes I'd divide
And burn in many places: on the topmaſt,
The yards, and boltſprit, would I flame diſtinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings the precurſors

Of

Of dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And ſight out running were not; the fire and cracks
Of ſulphurous roaring, the moſt mighty Neptune
Seem'd to beſiege, and make his bold waves tremble;
Yea, his dread trident ſhake.

Tempeſt.

THE circumſtances in this deſcription are brought together in a manner ſo unexpected; they crowd on each other with ſuch force and rapidity, that our ſpirits are in one continued hurry of ſurpriſe. You may obſerve, that this impetuoſity gives way by degrees to a more regular climax: we ſet out with ſurpriſe; we end in wonder.

Hor. I muſt add one remark to thoſe which you have made on this paſſage. The ſubſtituting the divinity of the ſea, to the thing itſelf, was a maſterly ſtroke of conduct. How it ſublimes the object?

Eug.

Eug. You have ſeen in the laſt inſtance, that the ſublime is produced [*s*], partly, by the choice of great circumſtances; partly, by the rapid ſucceſſion of thoſe circumſtances: on the other hand, the Beautiful, which tends to delight, not, to tranſport us, may receive an equal advantage from the ſucceſſion of the ideas, and this, on a principle quite oppoſite to the former---

From camp to camp, through the foul
womb of night,
The hum of either army ſtilly ſounds;
That the fixt centinels almoſt receive
The ſecret whiſpers of each others watch.
Fire anſwers fire, and through their paly
flames
Each battel ſees the other's umber'd face.
Steed threatens ſteed, in high and boaſtful
neighs,
Piercing the Night's dull ear; and from the
tents
The armourers accompliſhing the knights,
With

[*k*] Ο μεν γαρ τη εκλογη των ακρων λημμαλων, ο δε τη συκνωσει των εκλελεγμενων.

Longinus, Sect. 10.

With buſy hammers cloſing rivets up
Give dreadful note of preparation.
Chor. to *H.* V.

We may obſerve in the progreſſion of ſounds, a perfect correſpondence with what has been here remarked concerning our ideas: for, in muſic, we are *tranſported* by ſudden tranſitions, by an impetuous re-iteration of impreſſions: on the contrary, we are *delighted* by a placid ſucceſſion of lengthened tones, which dwell on the ſenſe, and inſinuate themſelves into our inmoſt feelings. The analogy between Poetry and Muſic is not confined to theſe two effects. We know, that in both theſe arts, a well ſupported climax is a conſtant ſource of the ſublime. Again, as in muſical compoſition, harmony is the reſult of a well choſen union and ſucceſſion of ſounds, ſo, in Poetry, there is a harmony or beauty, which ſprings from the moſt natural and pleaſing arrangement of our ideas.

Aſp. I READILY comprehend, that a gradual riſe from ſmaller circumſtances to greater, ſhould be productive of the ſublime,

lime, becauſe, a contrary proceſs has always a mean effect. Of a beauty of order diſtinct from this, I have not ſo clear a conception.

Eug. THE beauty of order may be proved by the following experiment. Were you, in the above deſcription of a night ſcene, to change the order of the circumſtances, you would find, that each particular idea would loſe a part of its force, and that the general effect would be conſiderably weakened. What can be the reaſon of this, but that the arrangement of the ideas is, at preſent, ſuch, as to give the greateſt truth and evidence to the thing repreſented; ſo that the imagination, not being delayed, or embarraſſed by the neceſſity of ſtudying its object, receives every impreſſion, as it offers, with facility and promptneſs? It is on this principle, that, in the general plan, or diſpoſition of a ſubject, we are ſo well pleaſed with that perſpicuity of order, that clearneſs of connexion, by which the ſeveral parts ſeem to grow out of each other, and the ſatisfaction of the underſtanding every where keeps pace with the

pleaſures

pleaſures of the imagination. From theſe obſervations we may draw the following concluſions; firſt, that fine writing depends as much on a happineſs in the arrangement, as in the choice of our ideas: in the next place, that all ſuch progreſſive energy or beauty as has been here deſcribed, muſt, equally with thoſe images which are founded on compariſon, be entirely foreign to painting.---

Hor. We cannot, it is true, paint a compariſon or a metaphor; but, we may repreſent the various affections and paſſions of the mind, by clothing them in images, and as it were, drawing forth the ſoul into feature and action. Here, it ſhould ſeem, that the Painter and Poet go hand in hand; and it may be, with ſome advantage to the former, as his imitations come nearer to a reality.

Eug. You have opened upon us a new ſcene of imagery. As to your remark on the Painters advantage, I muſt obſerve to you, that the merit of theſe *ſimple Images*, or Pictures, whether it be in poetry or painting,

painting, cannot conſiſt merely in their juſtneſs; for, this is no more than what we *expect*: it muſt therefore ſpring, either, from an exquiſiteneſs in the degree of beauty; or, from a happineſs in the circumſtances. Of the former, we have a fine example in the deſcription given by Bellarius of his princely pupil——

- - - - - - - - - This Paladour,
(The heir of Cymbeline and Britain) Jove!
When on my three-foot ſtool I ſit, and tell,
The warlike feats I've done, his ſpirits fly out
Into my ſtory; ſay, Thus mine enemy fell,
And thus I ſet my foot on's neck;—even then,
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he ſweats,
Strains his young nerves, and puts himſelf in poſture
That acts my words.

Cymbeline.

Of equal beauty, tho' in a different kind, is the following picture of Love and Sorrow.—Imogen, on her huſband's going into

to baniſhment, had ſent her ſervant Piſanio to attend him to the ſhip; on his return, ſhe queſtions him as to the particulars of her huſband's departure—

Imogen.

Thou ſhoud'ſt have made him ev'n
As little as a Crow, or leſs, ere left
To after-eye him—
Piſan. Madam, ſo I did,
Im. I would have broke mine eye ſtrings,
crack't 'em but
To look upon him—
Nay, follow'd him, 'till he had melted from
The ſmallneſs of a gnat, to air, and then
Have turn'd mine eye, and wept.

Cymbeline.

The difference between poetic and real Painting, may be clearly ſeen in this laſt example: the circumſtances in this deſcription, which tend to heighten the beauty of the image in the laſt line, cannot be expreſſed by the Painter; he can have no advantage from a ſucceſſion of ideas. If, in ſubjects that are uncommon to the Poet and Painter, the latter be limited; ſo again, there

there are many, from which he is totally excluded. In this view, I ſhall continue, as I began, to mark the advantages peculiar to poetry. In each of theſe two laſt examples, the image ſurpriſes by the degree of its beauty. But, there are others which owe their effect, as I have ſaid, to a happineſs in the circumſtances. Of this, we have, I think, an example in that beautiful ſcene, in the Tempeſt, between Ferdinand and Miranda.

Mir. Do you love me?
Ferd. O heav'n, O earth, bear witneſs to this
ſound,
And crown what I profeſs with kind event,
If I ſpeak true; if hollowly, invert
What beſt is boaded me, to miſchief! I
Beyond all limit of what elſe in the world,
Do love, prize, honour you.
Mir. I am a fool
To weep at what I'm glad of.

Tears of gladneſs are not uncommon; but, Miranda, from her particular education, could have no knowledge of the paſſions in their extremes; ſhe is therefore ſurpriſed at

this apparent confuſion in their ſymptoms: her ſurpriſe is a ſpring to ours---

This leads us, you ſee, to an eſſential point in the pathetic, namely, when a ſentiment ſprings with a peculiar happineſs from the character and the occaſion.

Thus the Poet——

The Heats and Minutes of affairs are watch'd,
And the nice Points of Time are met, and ſnatch'd.

As theſe lines were written in praiſe of Fletcher, I ſhall give you an example of the thing deſcribed, from his Maid's Tragedy—Melantius, on his arrival at Court, hears that his friend Amintor was that morning married. He knew that he was contracted to Aſpaſia; but did not know that ſhe had been deſerted by him: in this inſtant Aſpaſia comes acroſs him—

Melantius.

- - - - - - Hail, maid and wife
Thou fair Aſpaſia! may the holy knot
That thou haſt ty'd to day, laſt 'till the hand
Of

Of age undo it! may'ſt thou bring a race
Unto Amintor, that may fill the world
Succeſſively with ſoldiers—Aſp. My hard
fortunes
Deſerve not ſcorn; for I was never proud,
When they were good——

When we know that Aſpaſia thought herſelf inſulted by the brother of her happy rival, this ſentiment becomes ſo affecting, that our hearts melt, and our eyes fill in the inſtant.

The uniformity in our feelings on ſimilar motives, though it be the ground-work of the pathetic, yet, at the ſame time, it naturally produces in us an indifference to all ſuch indications of paſſion as are obvious and general.

The buſineſs therefore of the Poet, is to give ſome unexpected advantage to theſe general feelings; either, by a happineſs in the incidents from which they ſpring; or ſome peculiarity in the ſituation and character of the perſon affected: of this we

have a complete example, when the Daughters of Lear preſs hard upon him to reduce the number of his Knights—

Regan.

- - - - - - If you come to me,
(For now I ſpy a danger) I intreat you
To bring but five and twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice—

Lear. I gave you all—

The ingratitude of a daughter, who owed every thing to a father's generoſity, might naturally produce ſuch a reproach as this—but it receives an additional tenderneſs from the violent character of Lear, and the aggravativg circumſtances of his children's conduct.

If the Pathetic, as ſhould ſeem from theſe proofs, muſt owe its effect to the occaſion which produced it; the ſame may be affirmed, in part, of the ſublime: I ſay in part, becauſe though great ſentiments, when produced in the Drama, muſt, in common with the pathetic, derive a particular and ſpecific beauty from a happineſs in

in their application; yet there will be this difference between them, that if a pathetic ſentiment be conſidered independent of the occaſion which produced it, it loſes its pathetic force. On the other hand, if a ſublime ſentiment be conſidered in the ſame light, it loſes the advantage it received from a happineſs in its application, but retains its intrinſic greatneſs. This, I think, will appear, by comparing the anſwers of Aſpaſia and Lear, in the two laſt examples, with the following reply of Guiderius, to the raſh and fooliſh Cloten, who had threatened to kill him.

Cloten.

Art not afraid?

Guid. Thoſe that I rev'rence, thoſe I fear, the wiſe;
At fools I laugh, not fear them.---

THIS ſentiment had been noble on any occaſion; on this, it is happy as well as great.

FROM theſe obſervations it is evident, that the variety and force of our ſenti-

ments, particularly in the pathetic, muſt depend on the variety and nature of their motives. In this the Painter is extremely confined; for among the infinite turns and workings of the mind, which may be expreſſed by words, and become the ſprings of ſentiment, there are ſo few to which he can give a ſhape or being; and his indications of a peculiar and characteriſtic feelings, are ſo vague and undeciſive, that his expreſſions, like their motives, muſt be [q] obvious and general.

It

[q] If Painting be inferior to Poetry, Muſic, conſidered as an imitative art, muſt be greatly inferior to Painting: for as Muſic has no means of explaining the motives of its various impreſſions, its imitations of the Manners and Paſſions muſt be extremely vague and undeciſive: for inſtance, the tender and melting tones which may be expreſſive of the Paſſion of Love, will be equally in uniſon with the collateral feelings of Benevolence, Friendſhip, Pity, and the like—Again, how are we to diſtinguiſh the rapid movements of Anger, from thoſe of Terror, Diſtraction, and all the violent agitations of the Soul? But, let Poetry co-operate with Muſic, and ſpecify the motive of each particular impreſſion, we are no longer at a loſs; we acknowledge the agreement of the ſound with the idea, and general impreſſions become ſpecific indications of the Manners and the Paſſions.

It is obſervable, that the ſame Critics, who condemn ſo much in Shakeſpear a neglect of the unities, are equally forward in acknowledging the ſingular energy and beauty of his ſentiments. Now, it ſeems to me, that the fault which they cenſure, is the principal ſource of the beauties which they admire. For, as the Poet was not confined to an [r] unity and ſimplicity of

 action,

[r] Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, chap. vi. obſerves, that the firſt Dramatic Poets were irregular in the conduct of the Fable; but excelled in the Manners, and in the Diction: that the Poets of his time, on the contrary, excelled in the conduct of the Fable, but were weak in the Manners, and declamatory in the Diction. By the Manners, are to be underſtood all thoſe ſentiments which become indications of Character. The advantage of theſe in Tragedy, according to Ariſtotle conſiſts in this, that they give us a rule, by which we may judge what the reſolutions and actions of the perſons in the Drama will be. After this, he cenſures the Poets of his time, for being weak in the Manners. Αι γαρ νεων των αλειφων, ανηθεις τραγωδιαι εισι. Dacier, his commentator, has paſſed the ſame cenſure on the French Drama—Aujourdhui, dans la plus part des piéces de nos Poetes, on ne connoit les mœurs des perſonnages, qu'en les voiant agir. As both the Greek and French Poets, here

action, he created incidents in proportion to the promptneſs and vivacity of his genius. Hence, his ſentiments ſpring from motives exquiſitely fitted to produce them: to this they owe that original ſpirit, that commanding energy, which overcome the improbabilities of the ſcene; and tranſport the heart in defiance of the underſtanding. I do not mean by this to juſtify our Poet in all his exceſſes. It muſt be confeſſed, that he has often carried the indulgence of his genius much too far: but, it is equally certain, that a rigid obſervance of the dramatic unities is not free from objections: for, as no one ſimple and confined action can furniſh many incidents, and thoſe, ſuch as they are, muſt tend to one common point, it neceſſarily follows, that there muſt be a ſameneſs and uniformity in the ſentiments. What muſt be the reſult of this? Why, narration is ſubſtituted in the place of the action; the weakneſs in the manners ſupplied by elaborate deſcriptions; and the quick and lively turns of

here ſpoken of, were rigid obſervers of the dramatic Unities, theſe facts muſt ſtrongly confirm what has been advanced on this ſubject.

of paſſion are loſt in the detail, and pomp of declamation.

Hort. MAY we not add to theſe an objection, which has often ſtruck me, and which extends to the conduct of the fable itſelf? When the action is confined to the time of the repreſentation, the Poet muſt often bring events together within the ſpace of four hours, which, in the natural courſe of things, would have taken up as many days. Thus, by a ſtrange kind of management, he commits a violence on nature, in order to come nearer to truth.

Eug. IT is, to ſoften, in ſome meaſure, this impropriety, as well as to conform to the unities, that theſe events, inſtead of being brought into action, are ſo often thrown into [*s*] narration. But, this is a ſubject which cannot properly be examined in a morning's converſation: beſide, we have other objects which demand our attention.

[*s*] Εστιν ουν τραγωδια μιμησις πραξεως σπουδαιας και τελειας—και δι απαγγελιας——

Ariſt. De Poetica. Cap. vi.

It is a point that has not yet been determined, how far Imagery may take place in the Pathetic. Were the imagination to have no ſhare in our deſigns upon the heart, the Poet's taſk would be, indeed, a hard one. The difficulty then can only be, to ſet bounds to this indulgence. It muſt be allowed, that in the extremities of paſſion, all ſtudied and ambitious ornaments are to be avoided: hence I ſhould judge, that thoſe images which are founded on compariſon, can have little agreement with the ſimplicity of the Pathos and this diſagreement will always be found to increaſe in proportion as the points of ſimilitude are ſpecified and enlarged. But this objection will not extend to ſimple images: theſe are often happily employed in the Pathetic; in theſe, Poetry co-operates with Painting; and even borrows her ideas from her ſiſter Art——

Thus, in anger—

Romeo.

Alive, in Triumph, and Mercurio ſlain?
Away to heav'n reſpective lenity,

And

And [*t*] fire-ey'd Fury be my conduct now!
In grief——
Juliet. Is there no pity ſitting in the clouds,
That ſees into the bottom of my grief?
R. and *J.*

Of all our paſſions, that of Love ſhould ſeem to have the greateſt connexion with the fancy. If, therefore, the diſtinction here made between ſimple and comparative imagery, ſhould hold good in this paſſion, it will hardly be diſputed in others. I ſhall reſt the truth of my obſervation, as I have hitherto done, on examples.

Juliet.

- - - - - - - Sweet, good night;
This bud of love, by ſummer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
R. and *J.*

[*t*] Should this compound Epithet "fire-ey'd" be thought inconſiſtent with the true Pathos, it will be the ſtrongeſt proof that can be given, of the neceſſity of a ſtrict ſimplicity on all ſuch occaſions.——

THIS is not the language of nature; true paſſion is impatient of ſtudied embelliſhments. Let us now ſee, how far the operations of the fancy may be brought to correſpond with the movements of the heart—

Ferdinand.

Wherefore weep you?

Miranda. At mine unworthineſs, that dare not offer
What I deſire to give; and much leſs take
What I ſhall die to want: but this is trifling;
And all the more it ſeeks to hide itſelf,
The bigger bulk it ſhews. Hence *baſhful Cunning,*
And prompt me, plain and holy Innocence.
I am your wife, if you will marry me;
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow
You may deny me; but I'll be your ſervant,
Whether you will or no.

Ferdinand. My miſtreſs, deareſt,
And I thus humble ever.

Miranda. My huſband then.

Ferdinand.

Ferdinand. Ay, with a heart as willing
As *Bondage* e'er of freedom; here's my hand.
Miranda. *And mine, with my heart in't.*

In the images here emloyed, there is no artifice, no deſign; they are as ſimple as Truth herſelf.

Thus far, Aſpaſia, I have endeavoured to give you ſome general ideas of the principal beauties in Poetry. I ſhall now proceed to thoſe which I call the ſubordinate Beauties; not, that they are always inferior in their effects, but becauſe thoſe effects are produced by means leſs obvious; and ſpring more from the manner, than from the idea itſelf. This is a diſtinction, which, in ſome caſes, will be preſerved with eaſe; in others, with difficulty: however, if the nature of the beauty, whatever it is, be well underſtood, I cannot think it of any great conſequence in what claſs it is to be ranked.

It is the peculiar province of Poetry, to raiſe us above the level of our ordinary ideas.

ideas. But we are not to expect, that this can be done by a continued ſucceſſion of beautiful images, or affecting ſentiments. Here then, Art comes in aid of Nature; and our ideas muſt derive an importance from the manner in which they are conducted.——With what a ſingular delicacy does Ophelia, when ſhe ſolicits Hamlet to take back his preſents, reproach him with the change in his affections?

Hamlet.

No, I never gave you ought.

Oph. O my good Lord, you know right well you did,
And with them, words of ſo ſweet breath compos'd,
As made the things more rich; *that perfume loſt,*
Take theſe again.—

The manner is ſomewhat varied in the following inſtance: Camillo, in the Winter's Tale, endeavours to diſſuade the young Lovers from expoſing themſelves to the croſſes of fortune.

You

- - - - - - - - - You know,
Proſperity's the very bond of Love,
Whoſe freſh complexion, and whoſe heart together,
Affliction alters.
Perdita. - - - One of theſe is true;
I think affliction may ſubdue the cheek,
But not take in the mind—

FROM an elegance in the turn of the thought, we naturally paſs to a Felicity in the expreſſion.—Thus, Poſthumus reflecting on his Wife's infidelity.

Me of my lawful pleaſures ſhe reſtrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with
A pudency ſo roſie, the ſweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her
As chaſte as *unſunn'd Snow.*— *Cymb.*

Hor. UNSUNN'D Snow—The expreſſion is beautiful: but is not the image likewiſe new, and wholly Shakeſpear's?

Eug.

Eug. YOU'RE in the right, Hortenſius; but I was ſo intent on the force of the Expreſſion, that I quite overlooked the novelty in the idea. The completion of Beauty is in their Union: of this we have an exquiſite example, where Jachimo ſteals upon Imogen as ſhe ſlept.

The crickets ſing, and man's o'er-labour'd
ſenſe
Repairs itſelf by reſt: our Tarquin thus
Did ſoftly preſs the ruſhes, *ere he waken'd*
The Chaſtity he wounded.

Cymbeline.

To repreſent Lucretia by perſonifying her virtue, was a beauty in the Thought: the elegant preciſion with which the action is deſcribed, is a beauty in the Manner. In this analyſis, we diſcover the limits between Nature and Art; for if by Nature we mean the intrinſic Merit in the Thought; by Art muſt be underſtood, 1. Every advantage given to that thought, to the improvement of its original beauty. 2. Every ſuch happineſs in the manner, as ſupplies the want of Novelty in the Idea.

Aſp.

Aſp. The firſt part of your deſcription of Art, has been fully explained by the examples you have given: but, I do not, as yet, clearly comprehend, how a happineſs in the manner can ſupply the want of Novelty in the Thought.

Eug. We can beſtow a Novelty on a known object, either by diſcovering in it ſome new circumſtance or quality; or by varying and improving its uſual impreſſion. We have an example of the former, in the reflexion made by Helena on the vanity of her love for Bertram.

- - - - - - - - - - Indian like
Religious in mine error, I adore
The ſun that *looks upon his worſhiper,*
But knows of him no more.
All's Well, that Ends Well.

Again, when the Shepherd, in the Winter's Tale, is queſtioned by Polyxenes, concerning the love of Florizel for Perdita -----

Shepherd.

Shepherd.

- - - - - - Never did the *Moon*
So *gaze upon the waters*, as he'll ſtand,
And read my Daughter's eyes.

I NOW come, Aſpaſia, to the explanation you deſire. When a known object preſents itſelf to us, through a new and unpracticed medium, we conſider the novelty as inherent in the object. It is much the ſame with reſpect to our ideas; whatever is original in the Repreſentation, is tranſferred to the Thing repreſented. For inſtance——The conſideration that all men have ſprung from the ſame origin, and are deſtined to the ſame diſſolution, has been often employed, as a check on human pride, and an incitement to a ſocial affection. How is this urged by the Poet?

Arviragus.

- - - - - - Brother, ſtay here;
Are we not Brothers?
Imag. So man and man ſhould be;

But

But clay and clay differs in dignity,
Whoſe duſt is both alike.

Cymb.

Is not the energy with which this Idea is conveyed, equivalent to a novelty in the Idea itſelf? The ſame effect may be produced by a happineſs in the uſe and application of a known image—As in the advice given by Lady Macbeth to her Huſband.

Look like the innocent flower,
But *be* the ſerpent under't.

Hor. FROM the light which you have thrown on this ſubject, we may account for the oppoſition in our judgments, when we beſtow on Writers the reputation of being Original. For, a Poet may be original in the manner, and not at all ſo in his Ideas.

Eug. TRUE Genius, Hortenſio, will be original in both: of this we ſhall have a further proof, in the uſe that Shakeſpear has made of the qualities and attributes of the

the Heathen Divinities, And here, I cannot but wonder, that a Poet, whoſe claſſical images are compoſed of the fineſt parts, and breathe the very ſpirit of the antient Mythology, ſhould paſs for being illiterate.

See what a grace was ſeated on his brow!
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himſelf;
An eye like Mars, to threaten or command;
A ſtation, like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heav'n-kiſſing hill.

Hamlet.

In this portrait, the features are borrowed from the antique; but they are united into a character by a creative fancy. —This power of giving an advantage to the moſt familiar objects, by ſome unexpected happineſs in their uſe and application, is particularly diſtinguiſhed in our Poet, when he touches on the Fables of Antiquity.——Thus Perdita, at a loſs for a variety of flowers to beſtow on her gueſts—

---O

- - - - - - - - - - *O Proſerpina*
For the flow'rs now, that frighted thou letſt fall
From Dis's waggon! Daffodils
That come before the Swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; Violets dim,
But ſweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath.

EXCLUSIVE of the purpoſe for which I have produced theſe lines, you muſt have obſerved the uncommon art of the Poet, in characterizing his flowers.

- - - They at her coming ſprung.

A FINE imagination, like the preſence of Eve, gives a ſecond vegetation to the beauties of nature. In theſe principles, and in the examples by which they have been ſupported, we ſee clearly the reaſon, why every enlightened age has had, and muſt continue to have, its original Writers. We have no right, therefore, to complain, that Nature

Nature is always the ſame; or that the ſources of Novelty have been exhauſted. It is in Poetry, as in Philoſophy, new relations are ſtruck out, new influences diſcovered, and every ſuperior genius moves in a world of his own.

FINIS.

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